



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

THE LESSON OF OUR DEAD

AN ADDRESS

IN

SANDERS THEATRE, HARVARD UNIVERSITY

ON

Memorial Day, May 30, 1918

BY

LIEUTENANT ANDRÉ MORIZE

OF THE FRENCH ARMY

D
639
F4
43
M8

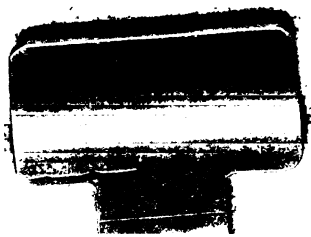
PRINTED FOR

THE HARVARD MEMORIAL SOCIETY

CAMBRIDGE

HARVARD UNIVERSITY PRESS

1918



THE LESSON OF OUR DEAD

AN ADDRESS

IN

SANDERS THEATRE, HARVARD UNIVERSITY

ON

Memorial Day, May 30, 1918

BY

LIEUTENANT ANDRÉ MORIZE

OF THE FRENCH ARMY



PRINTED FOR

THE HARVARD MEMORIAL SOCIETY

CAMBRIDGE

HARVARD UNIVERSITY PRESS

1918

D
639
E4
H3
M8

Edw.
Kil-
Harvard Review
7-8-1940
=

ADDRESS

BY LIEUTENANT MORIZE

THE significance of these exercises is expressed in the different elements which I see gathered together in this hall: — veterans of the Civil War, rich in memories of that heroic and sorrowful period, which gave birth, through blood and tears, to the moral unity of your country; young men of the next harvest, vibrating with enthusiasm and hope, eager to serve and to give yourselves; families in mourning, who have had the splendid and cruel privilege of offering, in this great struggle, the first sacrifice.

For many years this day was the celebration of a tradition. A pious and loyal thought united your hearts in the commemoration of those who had given their lives to the great causes for which your country had fought. It was the festival of the dead. It was a precious opportunity to seek, in the contemplation of great examples, useful lessons in valor and self-denial. On each occasion you went away feeling stronger and better; you realized that the young sons of your nation had a heritage of glory to preserve intact, and the minds of the living found in this association with the spirit of the dead new reasons for pressing forward in the way which they had opened before you.

Last year the day had already taken on a new meaning. This country, after two years of qualms and searchings, was at last living the exalted hours of a decision finally made. You had just declared war; your President had just announced — momentous words, promise and assurance of victory — that all the resources of your country, money, material, and men, should be pledged to the service of liberty; the judge had come upon the scene of the great drama and had thrown his sword into the balance. I remember my own emotion, in this same place, just a year ago. It was an hour of hope and of anxiety. We all thought of what the intervention of your country would mean; but another thought, at the same time, gripped our hearts. We thought of the price that must be paid, and one of those who spoke on that day, looking down on the young men grouped beneath his eyes, measured the pain of the sacrifice that must be borne.

This year we are again, and more than ever before, at the hour of hope — but we are also at the hour of sacrifice, not expected, but accepted.

The hour of hope! — indeed we have had cruel experiences in these last twelve months, and bitter disillusionment. The Russian tragedy has come to a disappointing conclusion. In these last two months the enemy, massing his strength, recklessly hurling men and shells into the vast furnace, has succeeded in overflowing and sweeping back our lines at certain places. He has managed to recover, for the time, a few square miles of our unfortunate French soil, martyred and bleeding, and has added to the crime of Reims the crime of Amiens; he has achieved the magnificent suc-

cess of killing in Paris, with his giant cannon — a proper symbol of Germany at war — a few hundred women and old men and children; but he has found, too, before him, after a few weeks of mortal anxiety for our hearts, an unbreached and unbreachable wall of British, French, and American breasts. He has found a man, splendid and modest, on whose shoulders rests now the heavy burden of command over all the Allied forces, a man whom all the soldiers of the Army of Liberty hail as the beloved chief whose very name spells courage and success. And just as a hundred and forty years ago Lafayette placed his own life and the lives of his whole army in the hands of Washington, General Pershing gave the American Army to General Foch.

Yes, more than ever before, this is an hour of hope and of confidence.

But it is also an hour of sacrifice and of tears. Every day the glorious lists come to add new names to those already engraved on the Roll of Honor — they come, so to speak, to apportion the grief among the towns and the states, — and we have here the proof that Harvard bears a privileged part. Already a few of the young men whom I have seen here have given their blood or their lives on the fields of France. Today our thoughts cluster about them, about all those who, at this very hour, are building with their living flesh the wall against which the German effort dashes itself in vain.

But however strong the temptation to bend today over these fresh graves, to lay on them the flowers of our piety and our fraternal affection, we feel that it would be a betrayal of our dead to limit ourselves to thoughts of them.

Today is the day of action. Our glance dwells rather on the young men before whom the road is open. And this day seems above all a blessed occasion for asking those who have fallen to lift up our hearts and our souls to their level, to beg them for advice and strength and in communion with them to draw on new sources of vitality and energy.

For it is true that we depend upon our dead. The spirit of the living is formed and moulded by the spirit of the dead. It is well to realize that in this huge conflict in which the fate of the world is at stake, the living are not the only ones who fight; behind the combatants, or rather among them, is the invisible army of the dead. The dead were there, during the tragic and glorious days of the Marne; when our soldiers, after the awful hours of the retreat, harassed, exhausted, decimated, had to face about, cling to the ground, spring up, and drive off the invader and save Paris, and France — on that day they felt mingling with them, as a sublime and effective reinforcement, the immortal heroes of the great battles which have so often saved or glorified France. They were there, more numerous even than the living, the men of Valmy, of Marengo, of Rivoli, of Austerlitz; the men of the last war, breathing in the ears and in the hearts of our soldiers the magic words, "*Patrie*," "*Revanche*," "*Victoire*." They, too, won the battle, all the mighty dead of the great wars of old. And when the soldiers of young America, with their British and French brothers in arms, shall begin the invincible advance which will free the defiled soil of ancient France, they will feel themselves carried onward by a deep and mysterious force, not merely their own

energy and their own enthusiasm; and in the wind that stirs their banners will hover the glorious souls of those whose memory we cherish today — the heroes of the War of Independence and of the Civil War, and those elder brothers who in the last four years have served and suffered and died.

The pluck, the bravery, the daring, the abnegation — all the high virtues of the soldier — develop in the depths of the unconscious self: and there, like a living flame, glows the soul of the dead which lives in us all.

Thus is forged the chain which from generation to generation links together the souls of the brave. Our acts are eternal; only their appearance is transitory. The humble soldier who defends his trench, grenade in hand, is able to perform his task only because of the thousands of others before him who have laid down their lives to save an ideal and protect a mother country; and his obscure deed will not be lost: if he falls, his face against the ground that he defends like one he loves, he also helps to make the soul of those who come after him stronger and better. The life of the present is woven of the lives of the past, and weaves the life of the future. Always admirable and true is the old figure of the runners who hand on the torch from one to another, the eternal flame which must not perish. You, my young friends, already reach out your hands to seize the flaming torch. Your older brothers of Harvard, the Princes, the Chapmans, the Starrs, the Farnsworths, the Seegers, the Champollions, the Byngs, and the Suckleys, have carried it thus far and hand it on to you. All those who are here, who know you and love you and are looking at you today with eyes filled with affection

and anxiety, know that your hands will be fit to grasp it without a tremor, and that the flame will burn brighter and fairer than before.

What do we learn from our dead ? First, we learn how to die — a much-needed lesson in the tragic hours through which we must live. Those who have had the privilege of spending long months among our fighting men, watching them do and die, know what strength one gains from seeing how they accept the supreme sacrifice. In many of the "*citations*" which are the tribute of gratitude from the nation to those who have given their lives to preserve it, one reads these words: "He showed complete disdain for death," or, "With absolute scorn for death." I do not like these expressions. Our soldiers, our comrades who have heroically fallen, do not scorn death, and do not teach us to scorn it. They know what death is, what it means for them and for those they hold most dear, and they teach us only to accept it as the natural, often necessary, conclusion of the task that duty lays upon us. They teach us that death is always prowling close to the fighting man, ready to clutch him. In all former wars there were moments when one was fighting and might be killed, and moments when one was not fighting and ran no risk. That is no longer the case: one does not fight continually, but death is ever present, soaring and watching. Everywhere in the trenches, and far to the rear in the villages where one goes in search of rest, death may strike, launched from afar on men in the fulness of life by a blind hand that makes no choice. That is the reality that everyone accepts, once for all, and that no longer worries anybody. Everyone accepts

it because everyone has seen about him many men die, simply and grandly, as though fulfilling one of the normal duties of the soldier under arms. It is not disdain for death — it is living a life in which death appears merely as an incident, natural and foreseen. Our men, receiving daily this sublime instruction from the dead, are not as they are depicted in certain books which are widely read in this country, although misleading and often insincere. Our soldiers are rarely of that “*Gavroche*” type who goes out and gets himself killed with a witticism on his lips, joking with death as it comes to him. They are almost always grave, simple-hearted men. They are straight and sound. Each one, according to his temperament and his faith, before the daily spectacle of death so valiantly faced, develops for himself the inward life which gives him that serenity which has so often overwhelmed me with admiration. And the common thought, which gives to all their strength, their constancy, their spirit of self-abnegation, is that which was so splendidly expressed by the failing lips of one of my comrades, who, almost torn to pieces by a shell, left us with the words, “It is not hard to die, it is not hard.”

Our dead teach us how to die.

But further, my friends, they teach us how to live. Each one of them transmits to us the example of the great deeds which beautified his life and glorified his death. And every one of us, thinking of the friends he has lost, should search his memory for the particular characteristics in which he would like to resemble them. But that is the value of personal meditation, which does good to our soul by storing up a secret treasure which

belongs to us alone. Besides these personal lessons, there is the wider instruction given to those who wish to fight by all who have already fallen in the struggle.

First, they teach us sacrifice — a magic word, at the same time admirable and dangerous; admirable when it means accepting the collective task at the price of abandoning all selfishness; fruitful idea, when it makes us understand that the present conflict absorbs individualities, melts them in the great cauldron, and makes of each man an obscure but necessary cog in the huge machine. From the soil of the battle-field, wet with the blood of our dead, this stirring ideal of sacrifice has grown up like a splendid flower. The example that the heroes have set is more potent today than ever. The enthusiasm of the first days, which swept our young men forward under fire, glad to give themselves, eager to sacrifice themselves, as though they feared that they might not have time enough to make of themselves sublime and magnificent offerings — that, indeed, was beautiful. But, to me there is something still finer and more beautiful in the calm, serious, deliberate sacrifice made by our old soldiers who have seen and known, yet do not hesitate; men who have been wounded once, twice, four times — who have often returned alone from missions in which all their comrades have been killed — who come back again and offer themselves for all the dangerous, fatal tasks — ever ready, ever forgetful of all but the great sense of duty which rules them and carries them on. Read the accounts of the rewards the country has given for such devotion: throughout this epic of glory, of blood, and of love, the spirit of sacrifice is the dominant note. That is the

immortal lesson taught by the thousands of humble crosses that rise from the fields of France and Belgium, crosses each one like a letter in an immortal poem which our dead are writing day by day.

But, my friends, I would have you read this poem of sacrifice with care and circumspection. I ask you to receive into your hearts the lesson that is taught, but to understand it truly. Several times in the course of this year your leaders, your teachers, and your friends have drawn your attention to this point. It is worth while to emphasize it once more. You too are eager for sacrifice, — and we admire your spirit. You wish to give yourselves: generous impulse, if only you have decided to give to your country and to the great cause something which is really worth giving. Do not seek sacrifice for its own sake, but for the result that it may bring. Do not imitate those of whom Maeterlinck speaks, who wish to sacrifice themselves for the proud purpose of seeing themselves in the flames of the holocaust. Begin by developing yourselves completely, become rich in knowledge, in thoughtfulness, in personality. Work to broaden yourselves and perfect yourselves, be quite sure that you really have something to offer, and, then only, seek the opportunity to offer it. Do not look for the shortest cut to sacrifice: follow the path that is laid before you, longer, perhaps, but affording the means of increasing your own worth. Do not believe that by rushing from college into whatever “war service” will give you a chance to risk your lives you will be fulfilling the wishes of your country and following the examples of the heroes whom we honor today. Your country knows the spirit that animates you and it depends upon

you. But it counts upon you as a reserve of educated and matured young men, prepared for this task, capable and strong. If you try to leave before the proper time, if you seek adventure and a glorious death when what is expected of you is hard work and a laborious life, you are failing in the task which your country assigns, you are neglecting the example of those whom you wish to emulate. In a few weeks we shall part company for a few months in summer: before we meet again in September I want you to think over these words, and make up your minds to act like mature men by submitting your youthful enthusiasm to this strict discipline.

By disciplining yourselves, you will again be following the precept and example of our dead. If they gave their lives it was in a supreme and decisive act of discipline. They were killed while executing a command — “acting under order,” as we say, and it is that which lends to their death its admirable grandeur. To fall on the spot to which one was ordered to go, doing exactly what one was ordered to do — that is the ideal death for a soldier. That is the glorious consummation of the work carried on day by day in all the humble tasks of the military profession. And it is in order to make our soldiers capable of attaining that moral grandeur, it is in order to raise them to the height requisite for such abnegation and sublime discipline, that day after day, hour after hour, we strive to instil into their minds the spirit of constant discipline, which is the essence of all military virtue. A hundred times in the course of this year we have talked to you about it, and we shall never tire of insisting upon it. We shall never tire of insisting that every effort of your will should tend to submit that

will to the will of those in command; that from the moment that you put on your uniforms and express the noble ambition of serving, you no longer belong to yourself — that you no longer have the right of choosing your path, but simply the duty of following whatever path is designated to you; that your only right is to obey without arguing, without waiting, often without understanding, without thinking for a moment of substituting your own choice or your own decision for the decision and the choice of your commanding officer. This is the higher form of the spirit of sacrifice, harder to accept at times, harder for our own hearts than the brilliant and glorious sacrifice of our lives, out in the full sunshine, face to the enemy. But until you have this spirit of discipline and understand it this way, you will not be soldiers — and the dead who look down upon you will not recognize you as their sons.

It is by acting thus that you will give to those who love you the assurance that the lessons of a day like today are not wasted. And at the same time you will give tender consolation to those who mourn, without protest but with unspeakable sorrow, for the loved ones killed in action. You will prove to them that the spirit of those who have died lives on in you, shining and beneficent.

We need this assurance to save us from despair at the awful loss of so many young lives, of so much energy and so much hope. Never since mankind has existed has it squandered its treasures with such prodigality. Those who fall are the best, the most ardent, the most beautiful. Humanity, after this cataclysm, will be impoverished, crippled, mutilated.

And we should be discouraged and cast down if we did not believe that all the spiritual forces released by death from their material shell are not lost, but light upon you, enter into you, so that in you they may live again. "Every man who meets death in a deed of heroism," writes Maeterlinck, "gives forth a virtue which descends again upon us, and in the violence of a premature end nothing is lost and nothing is wasted. Death does not overcome life; it is powerless against it. What it takes from those who fall, passes to those who stand. If the number of lamps is diminished, the height of the flame is increased. Death has no victory so long as living men remain."

My friends, rich in the promise of youth, death will gain no victory over you so long as you turn to the mighty dead to learn from them the lesson of how to live and how to die.

At the conclusion of Lieutenant Morize's address, Mr. William C. Lane, president of the Harvard Memorial Society, presented to the University, and President Lowell, in the name of the University, accepted a large standing panel of oak, designed by Charles A. Coolidge, bearing the roll of Harvard men who have given their lives for the cause of liberty and democracy in the present war.

Mr. Lane said:

I have the honor, on behalf of the Harvard Memorial Society, to present to the University this Roll of Harvard Men who have given their lives for the cause of liberty and democracy in the present war. This is not a permanent

memorial of them — that will take some other shape — but simply a current and honorable record, to be added to and continued week by week, so long as the sacrifice of life is demanded.

We are proud of these men, our brothers, and we would hold them in honor by keeping their names thus before us, an inspiration and an example. They have given their service in fullest measure, and in this they represent hundreds — yes thousands — of others who are ready to do the same.

Of the seventy-five men whose names are written upon this board, more than half offered themselves for foreign service when as yet there was no opportunity for service under the American flag. They outran their country, and pressed forward with a high chivalry and fine self-devotion, under foreign flags, to fight the enemy or to rescue the suffering, and the same is true of hundreds of their brothers, who have fought and labored hand in hand by the side of the other foes of despotism. Of every one it may be said, in the words written long ago by Algernon Sydney, and repeated at the head of this Roll, "*Manus hæc inimica tyrannis*," and, as the motto of Massachusetts expresses it, by the sword they are seeking peace under the protection of liberty.

Over these names we have carved two fitting lines from Lowell, linking our heroes of the present with the heroes of the Civil War — lines which apply as well now as then, to spirits who spring forward in the path of service, but return not:

"And the high soul burns on to light men's feet
Where death for noble ends makes dying sweet."

At the request of Major Henry L. Higginson, who presided over the meeting, Mr. Lane read the following verses by Owen Seaman.

You that have faith to look with fearless eyes
Beyond the tragedy of a world at strife,
And trust that out of night and death shall rise
The dawn of ampler life;

Rejoice, whatever anguish rend your heart,
That God has given you, for a priceless dower
To live in these great times and have your part
In Freedom's crowning hour.

That you may tell your sons who see the light
High in the heaven, their heritage to take: —
“I saw the powers of darkness put to flight!
I saw the morning break!”

